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# THE INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF ETHICS

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## THE HAMMER OF THOR.

HORACE MILBORNE.

IT IS our painful privilege to-day to be spectators of the greatest conflict of recorded history. We follow each alternation of the crisis with the mingled exultations and despairs of the Athenian army at Syracuse, as they helplessly watched the sea fight which was to secure their safety or seal their ruin. And as our thoughts turn to them, so will the thoughts of future ages dwell on these momentous days: for it will need no genius of Thucydides to immortalise a conflict which transcends his theme as much in lasting import as in scale.

Yet on our more imposing scene is enacted the same tragic conflict. The same principles are at strife, though happily some of these principles have changed sides. Again from trivial and obscure occasions the same broad issues rise; the same political and moral ideals contend for the same prize, the domination of the civilised world. Athens stood for democratic freedom and individuality, Sparta for oligarchic subordination, discipline, the merging of the individual in the state. And the same moral principles were invoked. But here the parallel becomes inverted. It was Athens who preferred the claim of "culture," Athens who asserted that "might is right" in milder form by the mouth of Pericles and through Cleon and the Melian delegates with a brutality merely more lucid than the German. And it was Sparta who was the champion of the

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rights of small nationalities against one overshadowing power.

Even in detail there are many curious resemblances. It was a struggle of land against sea power, a fight in Bismarck's phrase between the elephant and the whale. On the one side a great military machine, on the other the power of finance. Sparta proclaims the freedom of the seas: and we are ever told by a recent historian that the real aim of the seemingly incoherent operations of Athens was to control the external food supply of the Peloponnesus and to starve her enemies into submission by blockade.

Let us hope that victory may fall again to the moral and not to the political Sparta.

It would be foolish to attempt to forecast the future; but it may be interesting to try to isolate some of the warring principles and ideals and to note those newly emerging or vanishing away.

In our land the first thing that strikes us is the great mortality amongst principles. Each party sheds its own, and shamefacedly covers its nakedness with the cast off rags of others.

We see the propertied classes cheerfully throwing away millions by the thousand in absolute loss, whilst a little while ago they assured us that to resign a small fraction of one hundredth as much for social betterment meant economic disaster and "the end of all things." We see them nationalise the railways, seize and work the chief industries under state control, and, worse still, appropriate what they will of the proceeds for the state, and never a word of "compensation." Where, oh where are the sacred rights of private property, which they have so often told us are the bed rock of all morality? And the Labour party. It was theirs to stand still and see the salvation of the Lord, and they stand still—and strike. They see the war actualising their wildest dreams, and they would stop the war. They are state socialists and state and society may perish before the least of their class interests. They are for liberty but for one liberty only will they strike—the liberty

to be slaves. They would put down militarism,—by turning the other cheek to the mailed fist; by accepting the only militarism they have to fear, which they must rid Germany and the world of, if their dreams of national and international beatitude are even to be dreams. They oppose conscription: and they do not see that it flows directly from the very essence of socialism, that whatever its terrible effects may be, it in no way endangers social democracy in France, though we must admit that it has succeeded in tainting it with that virus of patriotism, which sets the national existence before the interests of the class, or the crotchets of individuals. At any rate it must not continue after the war. And they do not see what William James has pointed out that by such service in peace time the nation may gradually be familiarised and led to that form of national service which is their ideal. Above all things they say it must not serve as a pretext for industrial conscription. Industrial conscription—the very definition of socialism. If we scratch these Socialists we find them but bourgeoisie. The workers ape respectability—in second hand Liberal garments. And Liberalism. What words can depict the humiliation of a party, doing penance for a war they have directly caused, by having to conduct it themselves, finding what satisfaction they can in the consciousness that they are doing their best to fail, accepting Protection, discarding voluntarism, forcing conscription, outraging that Holy of Holies, the conscience of the political dissenter. With what joy would Matthew Arnold have seen the Liberal party smash its dearest idol, the right of the Englishman to do what he likes, and nothing he dislikes.

This time all the parties have been caught bathing together. Snatching the nearest garment, the Tory again robs the worker,—of his principles. Labour walks respectable—in Liberal broadcloth. For the Liberal nothing is left but to hang his head in martial uniform.

If the clothes philosopher could come again with what grim delight would he watch the formulas, the old clothes,

flying down the whirlwind. And what would the old Teuton think of the stark and shameless splendours now bare to every eye? Let us not be too sure.

Now all the petty antagonisms, all the fantastic hates are stilled which the heart of man devises to support the tedium of peace, all passion is polarised to one world issue. It is no cheap and meaningless antithesis of "might and right." It is the clash of equally noble, equally vital ideals, of liberty and discipline. Which will prevail we cannot tell; but we may surely say that whichever in the end prevails, will only do so by large absorption of the spirit of the other.

However obscure its beginnings, there is no doubt of the meaning and object of the war. Its prize is the domination of the world by the principle of the one side or of the other. On the German side, this is the conscious aim. Germany has learned the Roman secret. She has formed a compact central power, Prussia, Germany, Austria, Hungary, graded in privilege, divided in interests, unified by the support of the aristocratic elements throughout, and now to be knit indissolubly by blood and iron. She has surrounded herself with a ring of dependent kingdoms, *socii atque amici*. With these she will exploit the outer dung folk, beat down the proud, give laws and Roman peace to the whole world. The autocrat of Prussia, the constitutional sovereign of a greater Germany, the suzerain of the Balkans, will hold the hegemony of Europe. Then *delenda est Carthago*, and the master of the seas is the master of the world.

On one side the principle of aristocracy, centralisation, organisation, subordination, initiative, the will to power as a conscious end clearly conceived and methodically pursued. It is not so easy to see what three democracies and autocratic Russia<sup>1</sup> stand for, but mostly for the opposite of these. All are at least anti-aristocratic. They stand for the one or the many, not the chosen few. They stand they say for the principle of nationality, that is for decen-

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<sup>1</sup> This was written before the Russian revolution.

tralisation. All stand for liberty in its most elementary form, liberty from foreign domination. Of ultimate aims and deliberate constructive policy we see little. Both sides alike stand for peace.

It is perhaps not without reason that our peace enthusiasts are in tendency pro-German. For the triumph of Germany is the surest way to their end. Then at the cheap price of liberty they will attain that sure and lasting peace which they hold so dear. And then this war will, indeed, be the last.

But if we win is the millennium so sure? The principles of the German empire might indeed bind the world to unity if not concord. Could the principles of the British empire do as much? It is the glory of that so-called empire to have offered a perfect solution of the historical problem how to combine complete autonomy of the parts with an absolute solidarity of the whole. It is noticeable, however, that this complete attainment of the ends is accompanied with and consequent upon the total lack of the form and structure of empire, and of any aims at internal domination for which such structure alone could give opportunity. The autonomy existed before: the solidarity is shown in the hour of common danger. It is furthered also by community of race and culture; by wide geographical dispersal precluding mutual rivalries, and necessitating mutual support, by the vast preponderance of the mother country unifying the whole by a hegemony without jealousy and without question. A wider world-sown Hellas combining all her freedom with the unity she lacked. A unity all the more harmonious for the lack of those paper bonds which though weak to bind, are strong to hamper and confine. Most of these favouring circumstances are lacking in Europe to-day. The Allies are of different races, religions, cultures, developments: in elose contiguity within Europe and without, and with partially conflicting interests: with no clearly predominant partner. If they are victorious, attempts to constitute and formalise a union, which Lord Salisbury thought the chief danger to the British empire

of his day, will present still greater difficulties. The world may be unified by power: will it be by the principles of liberty and brotherhood?

Will England, Russia, France and Italy never again fall out? It will be harder for them in future. Not easily will the French turn their arms against the nation whose little army died to save Paris, and whose fleet undoubtedly saved France, or against the Latin republic which sprang to their side when things were darkest, nor any with the Russia without whom the cause of liberty was hopeless. And already we hear of a commercial unity between the allies which is often the prelude of stronger ties. But most of all because the same unity will be necessary to keep the prize as to win it. Germany will remain burning for revenge. As she was the creator she will be the preserver of the league of liberty and peace. Bismarck when he created a nation, seized Alsace and Lorraine with the express design that France should never cease to cherish revenge and that the constant fear of France might give the new empire firm and lasting cohesion. William II sets out to consolidate a greater empire by blood and iron, and like Croesus when he crossed the Halys, does so, but not his own. So the league of liberty may endure and become the league of peace, over-awing Germany and suppressing war by that highest right which is born of might. The amiable founder of the Hague tribunal may after all have helped to lay the foundation stone of the temple of Peace, whose builders, like those of Jerusalem, build with their swords girded by their sides, and Mr. Bryan might have found something better to do than signing scraps of paper called arbitration treaties—he probably does not know that there was a perpetual arbitration treaty between Athens and Sparta when the Peloponnesian war broke out—by bringing America to the side of the European democracies and confirming the supremacy of the armed league of peace. Kant showed long ago that universal peace is a dream save as enforced by some overmastering power. What Goethe said of individuals is true also of nations that they who would en-

joy liberty must every day conquer it for themselves afresh. The message of Germany is the message of history that the feet of Pragness are iron shod and red with blood. And whether she wins or loses that message is confirmed.

A writer in the cause of peace has pointed out that the modern tendency towards aggregation of smaller states in a few great empires, implies an advance by the formation of ever larger peace areas, of unities within which strife is eliminated. We have seen a further aggregation of empires in two rival groups, two areas of internal peace. And we may see by the victory of one, Europe at last reduced to one actual peace area. And with Europe the world.

War cannot cease till there are no aggressors, till all are satisfied with their place in the sun, or acknowledge a superior force. Whichever side prevails will be able to defy external aggression, but if the looser aggregate wins there will still be danger of internal dissension, though we have seen reason to think that unity will be promoted in nature's informal but most effective way, by the pressure of antagonising forces. There will be many suggestions of more formal bonds. The air will be thick with scraps of paper. But there is a great force which we may hope to see set free and tell heavily for peace. The chained force of democracy itself. The interest of the democracies is peace and they know it. They know that whoever gains by war, it is not they, that *quidquid delirent reges plectuntur Achivi*. One of the reasons why this war was rushed was to anticipate any concerted action of the popular parties. The interest of the Athenian democracy was war, and they knew that. But the interests and instincts of our modern so-called democracies are emphatically for peace. Our sham democracies do not even possess that fundamental right of all free peoples, the final voice on war and peace, enjoyed by our Teutonic ancestors, by the Romans and the Greeks whether oligarchies, democracies or kingships. I can imagine a league of really free democracies defying external aggression, and so far limiting it internally, that none can take place without the sanction of the whole people. Such



a check, though not absolute, will be more effective than many scraps of paper. I can imagine military service in Britain as elsewhere, the indispensable and only qualification for the franchise, and the conscientious objector left to make his own quietus. I can imagine the burden of armaments gradually lightened with the growth of the league and the dwindling of its possible foes, as the peoples sufficiently advanced to assert that primary right of freedom, the determining voice on war and peace, are admitted to its privileges and protection, till some day the golden age of the Antonines return, when a few hundred thousand men held all the world at peace—for a season.

But all this is if the democracies win which is looking a long way ahead. And peace, the democratic dream, is that in truth the ideal, or is war as the Germans hold, necessary, and unavoidable and good in itself? Can man so far deny the nature in which he is rooted, the nature that is behind him and about him and within him, nature that cares nothing for peace or comfort or happiness, but much for strength and courage and efficiency and patriotism? What nature wants she will see that she gets. Man may expel her for a while yet ever she returns, testing, battering, breaking at the last. Man may not long enjoy the liberty he does not conquer for himself afresh.

There are then two ideals, two spirits in conflict. The one democratic, utilitarian, cultivating the religion of happiness and the inoffensive virtues, the other with the religion of valour, aristocratic, adventurous, self assertive and overbearing as Achilles, *qui jura negat sibi nata, nihil non arrogat armis*. The democratic ideal of perpetual peace and happiness laid on by the state, of minimum work, of maximum pigwash: the rule of public opinion, that is of the average sensual man, with his sentimentalism, a finer sensuality of soul, his humanitarianism, that is kind only to be cruel, and abhors the hardness that is true child of pity, and born of these, feminism, that would hand the whip to the tyrant slave who is either slave or tyrant, the last logical unreason of the right of weakness: socialism, the

right to comfort, the devil abolished by act of parliament; anarchy, of the private will, private judgement, private conscience: all these are the well known stigmata of social degeneration, and were as prominent as now in the days of Euripides and Plato: though it had been left to later days to render the whole sacrosanct under the name of religion as private judgement reads, in the light of public opinion, its own grossness into its oracles.

Against the spirit of the sheep stands the spirit of the wolf, the aggressive predatory aristocrat. The spirit of modern Germany is found in its truest and deepest sense in Nietzsche, notwithstanding his sneers at Bismarck and Treitschke, his alienation from the modern materialised Germany, his good Europeansip, his cheerful admission of the essential barbarism of the Germanic character and culture. It is not for nothing that many a German private carries a copy of Zarathustra in his knapsack.

According to Nietzsche all elevation of the type of man has hitherto been the work of an aristocratic society, self assertive, barbarian in temper. It rests on slavery. The lower grades of society exist only for it. It is kept vigorous and true to type by continual strife with neighbours, or by continual repression of the subject Helot population. It is born of war and sustained by war and perishes in the peace of its own decisive victory. The higher type disappears with the struggle that fostered it, and his battle field becomes the happy pasture of the average man. But the end of life is not the production of mediocrity. It is not happiness, nor the good of the greatest number, nor of the whole. The whole exists solely for the superior caste. Neither is the end of that caste happiness. "After all," he says, "man does not really desire happiness, only the Englishman does that." Utilitarianism is the deadly English heresy. The hero's motto is "Live dangerously." The meaning of history is the production of genius. The end of society is the high and dangerous life of the nobler few who work out in nature's way the end of nature, the coming of the higher man, who by native right of power and creative will must and will rule the lower.

Nietzsche has been aptly described as an inverted Schopenhauer. He learnt from Schopenhauer the futility, the endless self punishment of the will to happiness, and reverses his conclusion. Instead of his master's oriental Buddhist message to kill the will to live, the individual craving for happiness, in the impersonal play of intellect, in disinterested contemplation, in art and music, and in sympathy with the suffering victims of the pitiless world will, Nietzsche wrings a tragic optimism from the pessimistic vision. Not in denial but in assertion of the will to live, which is the will to power, not in sympathy and compassion, the last temptation of the great, whereby sorrow is multiplied, the roots of pain are cherished and the sick infect the whole, but in tragic sternness steeled as much to the sacrifice of others as oneself. Of this doctrine the modern German will to power and calculated atrocity is a characteristically whole hearted and clumsy caricature.

In the tragedy of the world, Nietzsche finds a tragic optimism, the stern joy of the warrior hero, whose gods are Dionysus and Apollo, the gods of tragedy, the gods of joy: the Dionysiac ecstasy of life, of battle, of joy in pain, the passion of the will to live affirming in Apolline self mastery an Apolline vision of the future. The pessimist is he who would not live his life again. He would shrink with horror from the old fancy of the Greek philosopher that as infinite time exhausts the finite possibilities of a universe of limited elements and unchanging law, the present life must recur again and again to its minutest details. Socrates must wed Xanthippe, world without end. But to Nietzsche the doctrine of the "endless return" comes as a revelation. He affirms and joyfully welcomes this ghastly nightmare of the defeated and despairing, and proclaims it the final test of the optimist, who accepts life, lives it to the full, and would live it again and again.

It is curious that Nietzsche's idea of the best state is practically the same as that of Plato, whom with Socrates he is never tired of attacking. Lowest of all is the servile class, who supply the material basis of the structure in the

fitting pursuits of industry and commerce. They must be left their traditional beliefs, their slave morality, the full liberty to pursue the only happiness they know, material comfort and the making of money. Above them is the military caste who preserve the superior type of man, the spirit of honour, the religion of valour, the virtue which is manliness, the master morality of the masters. And higher again the philosophers, the true rulers, and their task as in Plato is the formation and transformation of moral values, which the inferior classes accept on faith from them. But the philosopher's eye is directed not upwards as in Plato to an eternal pattern laid up in the heavens, but forward to a nobler type in which humanity is to be transcended.

A prophet is never more national than when he rails at the backslidings of his people, and Nietzsche with all his denunciations of the Germany of his day, is possessed by her profounder spirit. The German state itself is an adumbration of his idea. Its greatness is founded on commerce. Her industrials pay willing honour and obedience to the ruling military class, and both to the intellectual who in the universities really mould the thoughts and ideals of the nation, and animate the whole with a single spirit. That spirit is the self assertion of the strong. It shews itself in commercial enterprise and expansion which colonises and exploits not the outlying barbarisms but the highest civilisations of Europe and America, in military aggression, in creative activity of thought, and in the intellectual loyalty which faithfully translates its new ideals into life. It is the denial of *laissez faire*, the assertion of the human will and its primacy in that nature of which it is the crown, by conscious activity to freely chosen ends. In the war of culture also she holds the advantage of initiative.

The self assertion of conscious superiority is the mark of the aristocrat. An aristocratic society whilst quick to assert itself upon the weak and undisciplined, is marked internally by subordination to its own best elements.

The Teuton, a "radical aristocrat" in Nietzsche's phrase, yields honour and obedience to what is really and radically the best. He reverences power, military power and intellectual power: his religion is valour, soldierly valour, and discipline and intellectual valour which fights for truth, to which truth is a conquest not a heritage (is truth not The Truth?) and having won it faithfully and fearlessly follows it out in action: who may be wrong in conception but never indifferent, brutal in application but never hypocritical.

This culture he now feels called upon to impose upon the world by forming a world state of like type. The Germanic stock, as a military and intellectual aristocracy, will rule and exploit alike the ignorant valour of the barbarian and the degenerate civilisations who love neither truth nor valour, but public opinion, uniformity, and comfort, and in return for material support may be left free to seek their happiness in the pursuit of riches, that true happiness of the greatest number.

We too are largely Teutonic and also of aristocratic instincts. But our reverence is perverted. We hate militarism and despise intellect. The English idol is the gentleman and however we define that word what we really mean by it is the man of leisure, the noble sportsman. Carlyle held up his hands to find the leaders of the people preserving their game, but that is what we like them to do, that is why we like them. A German will tell you that the sure mark of the Englishman is that he never does any work. Even amongst political personages whom we honour so highly—perhaps because they take credit for other people's work—we honour most those constitutional functionaries who do not function.

The difference of the two peoples is well brought out in their use of the term "culture." To us it is individual, the fruit and sign of leisure, a personal elegance, a sterile accomplishment. To them it is a national spirit energising through all their institutions. It is patriotic devotion, willing subordination to those marked as their natural superiors by those aristocratic virtues of the ancient Per-

sians, love of valour and love of truth. Truth of science and truth of world envisagement, and the energetic and loyal application of knowledge to action and ideas to life. The love of learning, of thinking, of working, of fighting for their own sakes. Initiative, the power to will, and the will to power.

German culture then is not a thing to sneer at. Instead of shrieking at her essential doctrines the right of might and the virtue of salutary sternness, as distorted in the barbaric passions of warfare, it would be well to face those great verities which underlie all German thought and action, to understand and to learn from the enemy.

For us German culture is already interpreted. It is the message of Carlyle, faithful in its force and in its weakness. He was little affected by the purely intellectual achievements of Germany. His voice was the harsh and grating cry of the man who has no music in his soul. He too in the manner of prophets was brought by constant reiteration and heightening emphasis into exaggeration and caricature. But his doctrines are the fundamental convictions, the inner soul of Germany.

He stands for aristocracy, the true aristocracy of strength and insight, the rule of heroes, and one of his deepest intuitions is the instinctive hero worship of the mass. More than for equality, liberty, self-government, they yearn for a master. But they do not know him when he comes. Left to themselves they choose a Saul and murmur at him. They love and follow him who asserts his will to power and rules by right of might.

And he stands for the eternal verities against the shams: for the authentic powers of will and insight, crowning themselves like Napoleon in Milan, with their own right: against the democratic shams of public opinion, with its worship of catchwords, formulas, and paper justice of sentimentalism, which is the denial of eternal justice, a popular dispensing power against the laws of nature: of humanitarianism which would make weakness weak and melt the waxen hearts of men. He stands for work not comfort: for doing

what we must, not what we like: for the joy of battle, not the ingemination of peace, peace, when there is no peace. Amid all doubts, disbeliefs and denials he is very sure of the devil, that to doubt of him is sure damnation: a devil not to be laid with rosewater, nor any pious exorcism: for there is no good without evil, no light without darkness, no life without death no peace without war.

He who saw the French Revolution as the judgement of an age which had forgotten right, might see to-day a greater judgement on an age which has made an idol of right, and forgotten the power which is its foundation and authority and final test: on democracy as the huddling of sheep that have no shepherd: on public opinion and popular values as the herd instinct of one sheep to be like another sheep, the gregariousness of a flock that moveth altogether if it move at all: on the popular religion of peace and happiness as the faith of the sheep that there are no wolves now, that the whole world is a paradise of sheep in unlimited clover, and when the wolf too finds his paradise of unlimited sheep bleat shame on the barbarity of "might is right"—for how should sheep understand that fundamental truth that "weakness is wrong"? who bleat of Huns and Attila: yes, Attila if you will—but Attila the scourge of God.

To-day the hammer philosophises. Again, as at the stroke of the Revolution, the world and the thoughts of man are irrevocably changed. None can foretell into what new shapes the world will be wrought, yet some of the inner changes of the thought that shapes the world, are clear enough. Thought is unfixed from its moorings. The anchors of principle are dragged. The hammer re-values all values.

Innate ideas expelled from philosophy entrench themselves in morality, the last refuge of the philosophically defeated, as principle that is, innate conviction, subjective self certainty, the fixed idea, insanity by definition. From postulates of consciousness they become postulates of conscience: that is, in reality, of the private wilfulness which

is ready to make absolute any, save the one absolute principle the *salus populi*. Those who invoke it do not even know what conscience is, that it can prescribe no concrete duty. Kant's Ethics is the final exhibition of the futility of the attempt to deduce them from the mere formal respect for principle as such. Conscience merely prescribes loyalty to such rules of conduct as have already been accepted from other sources, from the authority of churches, sacred books, eminent thinkers, admired persons, floating tradition, hypnotic suggestion, or last and least independent thought which can only in the rarest cases escape the suspicion of self will.

The hammer that falls on current moral and political conviction, falls on current religion also. Not on the creeds and mythologies which are sufficiently hammered already, but on those all potent ideals and ends which men actually follow and preach to themselves in the churches they build as receivers and reverberators of their own spirit. For there is never a religion born but the devil builds its tomb in a church. But they have forgotten their Bibles. There are two testaments, not one. The second is not the abrogation of the first but the capital of its column. Power is the prius of the good. The fanatics of either are the convicted heretics of the other. The faithful, according to Tolstoi, are the blasphemers of the God of Joshua and Gideon, of Luther and Cromwell. The Kaiser has well reminded us of the tribal god who authorised and prospered a conquest of sheer aggression in defiance of every right of prescription, and of the chosen people who smote the idolaters of Right in the name of the God of battles. With all development of human conception, not of the essence, of the divinity, the tribal god remains its root and core, and patriotism the type and essence of morality. Greece and Rome, chosen and conquering peoples of antiquity found in patriotism their real religion, and offered in battle the only true and reasonable self-sacrifice. And yet we have seen the religion of self-sacrifice itself stand silent and helpless before the great spiritual crisis of a man's life, viewing



the supreme self-sacrifice with open aversion, or faint condemnation or shamefaced approval. It has forgotten half of its message, that out of the strong comes forth sweetness. Good itself is not unconditional. Good is the restraint of the strong, not the weakness of the weak. It is strength that makes virtue virtue. *La faiblesse est plus opposée à la vertu que le vice.* "Be strong" is the universal commandment of nature, and the flower of human good is grafted on nature's stock. Beneath and before the will to good is the will to power.

The true, the beautiful, the good, are the three fold aspects of the divine, the three fold path of religion, and power is the root and touchstone of them all. Severed from that root the three fold revelation becomes the devil's gospel of sentiment, prettiness, comfort. Plato declared that the good was the useful, Socrates that the beautiful was the useful, and many voices tell us to-day that the true is only the useful, the means to power. The truth of the world without, we are told, is energy, the truth of the self is will, and knowledge but power in a deeper sense, a useful fiction. Power is the touchstone of truth and falsity. Keats in a flash of the philosophy which was stirring within him, proclaimed, "the eternal law, that first in beauty shall be first in might." And to Herbert Spencer, beauty was the suggestion of power exerted with an ease and mastery which heightens of itself the sense of power. Style is only economy of power, the effect with the fewest strokes. Beauty is the unconscious suggestion of power in activity to ulterior ends: prettiness its pose and conscious counterfeit. Power is the touchstone of beauty and prettiness. To the paradox of beauty that it only comes unsought, answers a paradox of good. For the good which the righteous pursue is but moral prettiness. Goodness is not sought but found in the following of external ends: the only felicity of man, the only happiness he will not scorn, lies in the consciousness of continual advance, the growing sense of power. Growth of power then is the human end, economy the human art, knowledge economy of thought, beauty economy of power, virtue power in poise.

There are two sermons from two mounts: and Sinai first. Or rather there is no priority and no contrast: no gospel of mere power: no gospel of peace and happiness either over against it or to follow. But both transcended in one: peace and happiness transmuted to something higher in the tragic calm of strife.

Optimism, the democratic miasma, now breathes from the old religion of pessimism and the chosen few. Yet all the great religious teachers are at one: the same voice sounds in every age and clime: Buddha or Schopenhauer, the conquest of happiness: Mahomet or Nietzsche the scorn of peace. Happiness the common end of man and brute, the great illusion, the mocking hope, the undying fire of nature's hell, is first denied by man, the rebel Prometheus, who sees the end of nature and foresees his own, who kills her hope and kindles his, who knows her secret, wrests from her the arts that over-ride her, tames her and drives her to what end he will: Prometheus the crafty rebel against earth and heaven, who steals from Jove his own divinity, ethereal fire, and plants it in the heart of man, who puts out the stars of heaven, and recreates the world in his own image.

In that great denial and conversion of nature, man sets his foot on the slippery rope-walk of the passage to the man in whom he shall be superseded and transfigured, with the clear eyed tragic acceptance of unequal conflict and predestined defeat, the tragic peace of surmounted happiness, the tragic welcome of a fate he would challenge again and again.

Tragedy moves all hearts and is yet a problem for the wisest. Perhaps from its very simplicity. For the meaning of tragedy is the meaning of life. It is the endless ache of the eternal will, the blind yearning of nature's abortive travail, the passion of Dionysus, the dying god: the vision of the passing of youth, the waning of strength and beauty, the deception of hope, the swift revisitation of loss, the slow conviction of failure, the slacking tide, the greying future, the desecrated present, the sting of the irrecoverable past:

and all that shadow of death projected as the idle passion of a play, by the spirit that affirms, and affirms it good.

Tragedy we are told was born of hero worship, the oldest and still the living root of religion. Its celebration in Greece, as still in Rome, was the typical and culminating act of religion. It is the essence of religion which is the meaning of life. It is the purification of the soul from pity and fear, from sentiment and cowardice, from happiness and peace, the Dionysiac draught of the cup of sorrow, the stern optimism of the conquest of happiness.

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